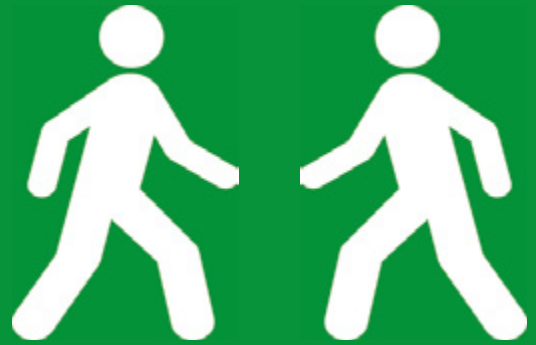
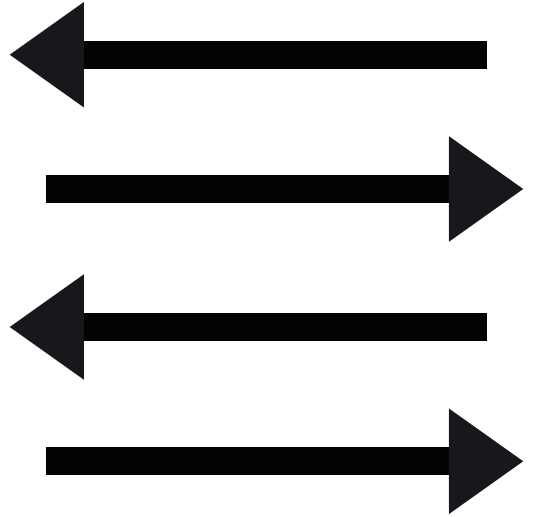


KLAXON 4



EIFAS





(when art lives in town)

URBAN EXPRESSWAY

The City is Ours!

Antoine Pickels & Benoit Vreux

MAIN STREET

Impatient Liturgies

Roberto Fratini

REMARKABLE EVENT

The "Game with Life" in *Domini Pùblic*

Carmen Pedullà

STROLL

Mons Street reView Between group portraits and image rights

X/tnt

ROUTE

What can I do for you ? Anne-Cécile is taking orders.

Nestor Baillard

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

The Brussels Central Station Time Laboratory

Ljud

NEIGHBOURHOOD

We are more than the place that we live

Jordí Duran i Roldós

URBAN EXPRESSWAY

The City is Ours!

Antoine Pickels and Benoit Vreux

Participate! This invitation, which at times is tantamount to a command, has become the chant of numerous art-forms nowadays, particularly those of interest to us in *Klaxon*, namely, those where urban space/s play a predominant role. In fact, these can be seen in action in the programme for “*La ville en jeu(x)*” [The City at Play/at Stake] initiated by the Foundation Mons 2015, bit.ly/1Slee2t which this current issue of *Klaxon* gladly echoes.

To participate is a means of engaging with art frequently present in relational aesthetics, public art and other socially-engaged artistic practices that constitute a large part of contemporary urban art creations, especially those operating in the ephemeral sphere of living art. Since 2009 and the beginnings of Cifas in this field, it is an unmistakable and oft-recurring trend in the workshops we organize, the commentaries we provoke or publish, as well as in the works we have championed. As it transpires, among those artists participating in this particular programme for Mons 2015, many of them have been collaborators and in dialogue with us over the intervening years. Hence, by means of this edition, there was a certain factor of acting as a sounding board for the project, and its prolongation.

At first with the provocative and restless thinking of Roberto Fratini, the scenic arts philosopher, in *Impatient Liturgies*, where he warns us of the pitfalls lurking in participatory practices and the discourse surrounding them, notably in their irrational character. Against these “cultural agencies” and these “impatient liturgies” Fratini espouses an artistic “agency” and a sense of “patience” in need of recovery, along with a conception of

art which would remain a chasm including when it calls for public participation and occupies public space/s.

This is particularly true for two of the artists featured in this edition, both of whom collaborated with Fratini, and participated in the Mons 2015 programme. The Barcelona-based Roger Bernat, whom the young researcher Carmen Pedullà analyses in her contribution on the socio-political subtlety of his participatory performance *Domini Públic* which has become a landmark in participative theatre. The Belgian Anne-Cécile Vandalem whose work *What can I do for you?* enrolls the spectator as the commissioner for the artistic work undertaken.

We continue this line of thought about public participation with testimonies by two other artistic groups, who both examined the paradigmatic shift of public space due to the development of the Internet. The Slovenian group Ljud, who also participated in Mons, return here with *The Temporary Time Laboratory* their experimentation at the Brussels Central Station, in which Internet tools are rerouted to enquire as how times passes in the station. Meanwhile the group X/tnt offers a new twist to the “Street View” tool by transforming it into a tool for re-appropriating the imaginary sphere of urban space in Mons, in a dialogue with the city dwellers. Its dramaturge, Antonia Taddei, returns to the participatory dimension of this spectacular work.

And, to conclude this issue of *Klaxon*, we offer our usual “neighbourhood” feature – albeit in this instance somewhat geographically distant from Hainaut, since we are highlighting the FiraTàrrega festival in Catalonia, a “historic/al” street theatre festival. Its artistic director, Jordi Duran, is in the throes of changing its *modus operandi* and civic impact, especially through participatory forms involving the most ignored segments of traditional “culture”. Advocating an “inclusive” culture it reminds us that participatory strategies should not solely apply to those who already know the rules of the game...

MAIN STREET

Impatient Liturgies

Roberto Fratini

“I was between them, not of them.”

Appreciated by the public, indulged in by programmers, branded with the seal of modernity, valued by those railing dissent against *official art*, and yet cherished by the high-priests of cultural policies as a socially capitalisable model of democracy applied to the world of art, the act of participating in a performance appeals on several grounds: it is politely orgiastic, immoderately ceremonious, still lukewarm vis à vis the utopias and dissidences which legitimised it fifty years ago and at the same time eminently re-hashable – a readymade version of a Revolution happily within reach of all mental compartments. A Revolution, in which the shift to the régime of the metaphor purified the disturbing aspect of bona fide revolutions, namely, its irreversibility. A parodic indulgence of that which some wanted when discussing a permanent revolution.

Public participation is the ideological *a priori* of public performance; it merely avails of participation so as to talk up participation in terms of earned value.

In most cases, public participation is even the ideological *a priori* of public performance; it merely avails of participation so as to talk up participation in terms of earned value. The offering made to the spectator (“please be that which you have come to view”), to assume authority, the authorship, the poetic “agency” (in the Spanish sense of the word *agencia*,

determining the active part, the execution, the “who does what”), the practical responsibility of participatory experience is akin to an overture from the mafia: the invitation, a gift one can not refuse. The fact is that, generally, people tell themselves that they are enthusiastic to accept, for no power apparatus is more cunningly efficient than that in which the dictate becomes a highly efficient ecstasy, an apparent take-over of power. How many participatory experiences meant to awaken the public’s civil or political consciousness merely unleash an emotional response: a generic enthusiasm towards the cathartic benefits derived from participation rather than directed towards its purpose, namely, coming to terms with the reality which should have, as with any art work, emanated from it. Invariably, it is more enjoyable to be manipulated than to learn what the manipulation consists of. We must therefore correct the observation: manipulation is not merely consensual, but also *sensual*. When practicing it, the issue at stake risks at being a hat trick peculiar to those interactive formats employed in the mass entertainment industry: to recycle as rhetoric of the emancipating the *sex appeal* involved in manipulation; the hyped-up effect of *seeing oneself participating*.

Manipulation is not merely consensual, but also
sensual.

Would it be possible to sketch an unseemly link between the progressive evolution of our notion of obscenity and that of the conquest of inhabited spaces and of “agency” (in the sense referred to above) dictated by the culture of participation, whatever the cost? Would not such participatory compulsion, as acclaimed by official Culture as the optimal chance for sociable pleasure in the end, be the ultimate step in the evolution of good-old obscenity, of its realization and tactile domestication? And, were we to consider the banality of the revelations that in most cases we offer to a public still excited to discover, or who think they are discovering, to

divulge and to divulge themselves, would it then not be the case that Participation is within the realm of cultural porn? For the pornographic experience consists essentially of this: to get excessively aroused about something we have always known. The porn ritual would not lend itself to such endless repetition, were its purpose specifically more mysterious than what it is. Participation tends to exploit a similar libidinal dynamic: theatre's precautionary measures arouse us whenever we get to see through them, to recognise them for what they have always been, as *though* we have never seen them: from within, as a player in the party or the orgy. If we view this beyond its metaphorical uses, all such participation, with its strict homeopathic dose of action and genuine risks, has less to do with a nutritive gesture but rather a voracious gaze: we perform the nice gesture of doing while watching what happens, just as *we perform the gesture of sex* when masturbating while watching porn. The act is even characterised by a certain attraction to cadavers. Its genealogy can be located in the pseudo-scientific zeal that drove the Sunday crowds in the nineteenth century to visit the capital's morgues in order to observe corpses at close sight. The cynicism that nestles in the cultural industry of participation with its good intentions is not to be outdone: culture with a big C offers the most pious reasons to come and view the mortal remains of theatre.

The spectator's duty to exercise his or her right to exercise control over the "active" segment of the performance is highly similar to the way in which religious slavery masquerades itself as a liberatory act.

Hence the need to ask what are the arcane recruitment factors involved in the *mobilisation* of the public; to question whether the viewer's ultimate submissiveness would not be the onus to uncontrollably claim those skills of interpreter and author that is on offer; and, whether the sublime recipe

propagated by all religions isn't what lurks behind Participation as a conceptual device: the spectator's duty to exercise his or her supposed right to exercise control over the "active" segment of the performance is highly similar to the way in which—by way of the liturgy—religious slavery masquerades itself as a liberatory act. We can speak lucidly of the poetics of participation and their latent authoritarian tendencies insofar as we have not re-interpreted the whole notion of Culture, *as a participatory and performative macro-dispositive in itself*, in the more correct conceptual framework of the criticism of religion. The first symptom of infiltration by a religious paradigm with regard to the etiquette surrounding Participation is the stupefying confusion which unfolds between ritualistic and political spheres: the rationale which champions participative live theatre based on neo-ritualistic grounds (with keywords such as *Community, Sacrifice, Sharing, Fusion et al.*) peacefully coexist with arguments championing that position on political grounds (in which concepts like *Consciousness, Debate, Emancipation* triumphantly scintillate). I was always of the belief that confusion between religion and politics only occurred in those *obscure times* upon which Walter Benjamin and Hannah Arendt so knowingly shed light on the climatology.

Traditional religion needs to be really used as religion, and likewise politics needs to be placed beyond use in terms of politics for us to profess that art deals with stirring the leftovers of one as well as the other for the feast of Culture.

The second aspect likely to justify the interpretation of the poetry of participation as religious ersatz is the intolerance that these self-same poetics have legitimised: from their perspective, the spectator who refrains from joining in the participative party is guilty of inhibition, of a reaction, of repression, of a lack of loyalty towards what's *New*, and moreover of being asocial, solipsistic, resistant to *getting involved in the game* (which is the *festive way*, moreover, to define the compulsion to play the role assigned by the apparatus in place); of a terrible rejection of *self-denial which alone in itself enables one to experience the fusional aspect of sharing*. Those

unconverted to Culture are undemocratic and sexually misguided. Behind its apparent mission to emancipate the collective body from the pitfalls of consumerism, and the struggle against a Power-which-excludes, the Participation-which-embraces is no less committed to organisational procedures and the mobilisation of the body aimed at producing, by means of *activity* by that body, *the self-evidence of a consensus*: both power and participation rely on the visibility of the body's conduct in a given dispositive; both seek and preach such quantifiable efficiency, this visible "agency" which, while acting as "thought in action", are used to pre-judge any ulterior motive, any hidden dissent, any abstention, any restraint (here again we have sinister analogies between the logics of *participatory* implementation and the logics involved in the making of porn, whose poetic principle is that we produce, on either side of the screen, physical evidence of the on-going pleasure). We can deduce from the participatory proceedings, as with each standard-setting organisation of the use of the body and the management of pleasures, an imperative for the orgasmic, which is likewise the ultimate and most terrifying of puritanisms: that which, while establishing the cultural experience as a compulsory enjoyment, commonly forbids all forms of passion not directly controllable by means of the action that expresses it. We deem anyone who refuses to admit his or her spiritual enjoyment as an "anorgasmic" who speaks badly of the orgy in which they participated without being involved as such. One could say that he or she did not come because they didn't play along.

The spectator who refrains from joining in the
participative party is guilty.

For a participatory performance the aesthetic, poetic and theoretical risk consists of taking for a solution what should be deemed a problem; and to unconditionally believe oneself *progressive* when it would be more correct to spell out the historically regressive aspects; for these aspects are not the

product of postmodern distortion: in recent history they have been present every time the utopias of Participation were proclaimed as the supposed panacea for all political *and* aesthetic misfortunes: from the extremist Feast of the Supreme Being during the French Revolution to the Wagnerian *Festspiel*, to the Nazi *Thing Theater*. It is difficult not to associate authoritarian tendencies with community mysticism from the praxis of performative participation. What is terrifying about the participatory mystique of the new régimes is precisely this cultural reprogramming they have undertaken with everything in politics or in religion, which has hitherto never been established, executed nor interpreted according to aesthetic classifications. This is the hallucination of the avant-garde which believes that since the theatre *comes* from ritual, then we can only have *absolute* theatre when theatre once again becomes a ritual.

It is difficult not to associate authoritarian tendencies with community mysticism from performative participation.

The totalitarian downward spiral only begins for real when we *culturally fine-tune* everything, which in yesteryear's participatory systems was dictated by necessity, by authority or by pure belief, as an "entreaty to participate". Could there possibly be a more dishonest practice than one which replaces the nostalgia for old dissuasive apparati of power by reformulating them post hoc as cultural persuasion? Over the course of history it sufficed that the act of participating should become the culturally conscious performance of a programme of affiliation so that it reneges on all religious and political domains, and that it *yet* should become this denaturation of religion and of politics that constitutes totalitarianism. All that is needed, for people to stop being themselves, is that they accept the toxic invitation to be author, actor and spectator at the same time as of their own representation as People. What ensues is the total loss of

awareness of representation even in terms of representation: the people play a monolithic role all the while believing not to be at play. Conversely, however, they believe to have discovered in this active, compact and highly manipulable service their individual truths beyond all forms of representation.

It's a matter establishing whether that which determines the "public" quality of "communal" areas is the fact they belong to everyone, or, that they belong to no-one.

The same could be said with regard to the function public space has played in all these cultures of participation. It's a matter establishing whether that which determines the "public" quality of "communal" areas is the fact they belong to everyone, or, that they belong to no-one. We should not forget that during the Middle Ages, as the phenomenon of urbanisation began to emerge, that modernity finished, shaping; the conviction that "city air makes one free" was dictated by the fact that the city with its open spaces embodied the only portion of land without a known owner; the definition of freedom assumed perforce a negative character. If *public*, at least in etymological terms, takes after the word *people*, and that we should assign the ownership of public space to the people, the very definition of people is traditionally negative: we are "people" to the extent we are not tainted politically and religiously; we are people, up to the point of the nationalist excesses in the wake of Romanticism, less in the sense of affiliation than of its opposite. Let us redefine the people as *the community, which belongs to no-thing in a stable manner in a space that belongs to no-one in a stable manner*. Whenever this community "occupies" public space, they merely do so, or should do so in any case, to save it from any unwarranted misappropriation, of any undesirable privatisation or domestication: we take to the streets to let off steam against the powers who close them off whenever we distract ourselves. We expropriate them so that nobody else (not

even the People who could solely exist as a compact entity in the dreams of ideologues) could appropriate them.

This has nothing to do with this frenzy of “re-appropriation” or “reconquest” of communal areas which besets current discourse. One has only to take a look at any flash mob if you would like to witness the most stalwart postmodern version of this *positive* appropriation of public space as theatre of an identity which claims to be collective, to the extent of feigning that the random and spontaneous nature of its performance are the result of the free adherence of its participants. Here, it is truly a People which give and give themselves a performance of musical and gestural unanimity; and since the people only *positivise* public space so effectively by transforming themselves into their own spectral figure of People, it is symbolic that the flash mob ultimately represents the commanding emergence in public space of the most extra-ordinary people of all, namely, those from the Internet and via telepresence.

One has only to take a look at any flash mob if you would like to witness the most stalwart postmodern version of this *positive* appropriation of public space.

It is tiresome to listen to artists complain that the city and its by-laws are not continually attempting to open up public space to the outpourings of contemporary art which seems determined, in its constant inflation, to colonise all the cracks in reality. Given the objective is to *positivise* creation in every aspect, it is obvious that the enthusiasm *for artification* clamours for the connivance of the *legislating* enthusiasm, of which the specific performance over the last twenty years was to fill each grey zone with regulations, to permeate every as yet to be *defined* sector of the communal living area: that people do not see themselves obliged to exercise that which remains of their ethical instinct, if there is a law for every dilemma. In this world of potential victimisation, we need to legally

cast the indiscreet charm of artistic dissent, so that these artists (these problem children whose irrepressible creative potential can in no way be repressed by the adult universe and its perversions) are under no circumstances the victims of the system and its manacles, but instead are from the outset placed under guardianship by the revolution which they are supposed to unleash.

The grey zones are the sole domain where art yet retains a residual opportunity to be neither weak-willed terrorism nor cloying submissiveness.

The debate concerning regulation and deregulation of public space is highly relevant when it comes to discussing political dissent. That which, however, constitutes the specificity of artistic dissent is the fact that it *intimates* its form within the fabric of reality, taking advantage of the real as a material which one can knead precisely where its quality remains plastic. Its purpose is neither to do what it does, nor what it can do, nor for that matter to do it where it is forbidden: rather, its objective is to devise the trick that subverts authorisation and invalidates prohibition. The grey zones are the sole domain where art yet retains a residual opportunity to be neither weak-willed terrorism nor cloying submissiveness. And yet, when they find themselves assailed by the frenzy of urban phenomena, performing artists often do exactly the opposite of what they should do: they endeavour to attract attention upon themselves, to be conspicuous and unpredictable, whereas their reason for abandoning the focalisation of theatrical space should have been to *defocus* the indices of *eventalism* of the performance itself.

It would equally be fair to ask whether the didactic proceedings concerning participation would not be within the realm of pedagogical deformation which wants that a child's life should be some form of playful and formative merry-go-round experience which goes round in circles with ever

stopping, avoiding as though it were the plague the abyss of existential angst that might arise from an unanticipated moment of inactivity or ennui; to ask oneself whether participatory theatre runs the risk of uniting with this mainstream “nurseryfication” of the adult world, which Philippe Muray so lucidly analysed; and to ask oneself whether the stridency of those champions of positive participation with regard to the ability of the public to contribute poetically to the “artistic experience” would not be the outcome of some educationists’ fixated assessment that every child is, to wit, a born artist. And, that we are all ripe to be artists, provided we are willing to be children.

We are all ripe to be artists, provided we are willing to be children.

Let us revert to the unduly overlooked difference between *cultural “agency”* and *poetic “agency”*. For if the former consists of all that is given in advance, in terms of values, speeches, classes, parameters, and formats, the latter is the mysterious component, the countless incalculable *differential* of all *artistic formalisation*: everything which creeps into the creative act, those factors which enable it to be so much more than yet another illustration of the image which its time has already made of itself, much more than yet another application of the rules of representation that these times have already inscribed in the proceedings in the form of Culture. Strictly speaking, *poetic “agency”* is that which should allow an artist to be not necessarily a soldier for the common good, nor an operator of a calculated break which the common good needs in order to cultivate the myth of its emancipation, of its democratisation *in progress*. Ultimately, the one and only criterion that will save the specificity of art and which will differentiate it from cultural mediation, reverts to the artist’s inescapable duty to deploy *form’s sovereign ruse*. This does imply that one is only an artist by virtue of losing innocence, by renouncing any claims to stimulate the innocence of the

community; and, if one accepts that the “positive” segment of creation, namely, that which the artist from the outset shares with society, his or her *cultural “agency”*, can by no means overexert the “reach” of the creative act; that it will remain a negative segment, where the relationship between artists and the public couldn’t care less about any form of mediation; where art becomes *a thing of life* and ceases to be *a matter of experience*.

One is only an artist by virtue of losing innocence, by renouncing any claims to stimulate the innocence of the community.

Given then that in recent times the benevolence of Culture principally consisted of muzzling an artist’s poetic “agency” so as to transform him into a *cultural agent*, one should not be surprised that we have in parallel borrowed from political correctness thousand of ways to convince that their *cultural “agency”* was hitherto a “*poetic agency*” in its own right. The result borders on the paradoxical: the tendency by many contemporary artists to insist that as far as they are concerned the status of artist and citizen are one and the same thing, and that their response to ethical and political dilemmas can only be artistic; and, the tendency to nurture the belief in the community that its social behaviours has such an irresistibly creative meaning that it would be worthwhile to submit them to a second aesthetic use; or, again, that the aesthetic realm is the place to feign the assessment and pedagogical correction for all that is wrong with these attitudes.

The paradox: the tendency by many contemporary artists to insist that as far as they are concerned the status of artist and citizen are one and the same thing.

But, since the emphasis on the faculty of *poetic “agency”* of an active public is so compelling, we need to ask ourselves whether it would not be an opportunity to rediscover among the public, a poetic potential which is contrary to the *idea* of agency: a poetic *patience*. If we stick with our more philosophical definition, patience is none other than the wisdom to accept everything of which existence consists, is not of the order of causality. And that we have to accept the *inevitable*s: the outrageous eruptions in the fabric of reality of a drastic misuse of given standards that seemed to ensure their very understanding; in short, a *form* of things that defies prerequisite *formats* of reality and of its self-representation. Need we add that such unexpected taking of form equally constitutes the most exquisitely negative material in existence, and that the principal lesson to be learnt from them is to reject as if misleading any temptation to instantly understand that which will offer its meaning exclusively by way of the longitudes, moreover unpredictable, of time of the mind? And, that we should respect the void, the absence of meaning they expose.

bit.ly/1NqOmDV

English translation by John Barrett.

BIOGRAPHY

Roberto Fratini



Roberto Fratini teaches dance theory at the Dance Conservatory and at the Theatre Institute of Barcelona. He also collaborates with many theatre and academic institutions in Spain and internationally. He directs dramaturgy training cycles at La Caldera (Barcelona), Pôle Sud (Strasbourg), in Swiss a. o. at l'Usine (Genève), Sevelin 36 (Lausanne), Dampfzentrale (Berne), and Tanzhaus (Zurich). He has worked with several companies as dramaturg, among others: the Caterina Sagna Dance Company, Inesperada, Germana Civera, Lanónima Imperial, Juan Carlos García, Silvano Voltolina, General Elèctrica, Roger Bernat... He has lectured on dramaturgy and philosophy of dance at many European festivals and universities, and he is currently a Theory lecturer at the Barcelona CSD. His poems, *Nodo Parlato*, were published in 2001. His book *A Contracuento. La Danza y las derivas del narrar* (Cuerpo de Letra) was published in 2012. The performance *Basso Ostinato* he directed with Catarina Sagna has won several prizes. In 2009 it was elected best performance of the year by the association of the French critics. In 2013 Fratini was awarded the FAD Sebastià Guash prize for his artistic and intellectual trajectory.

Photo : © Silvia Meneghini.

REMARKABLE EVENT

The “Game with Life” in *Domini Públic*
Spect-actors in Roger Bernat’s works
Carmen Pedullà

Under the direction of Roger Bernat, the Barcelona based *Friendly Face of Fascism* – otherwise known as FFF – constitutes a vital element in the panorama of contemporary participatory theatre. Founded in the Catalan metropolis in 2008 following the creation of *Domini Públic*, FFF has presented itself from the outset as emblematic for that characteristic type of interactive theatre to be encountered in much of their output, notably in *La Consagración de la Primavera*, *Pendiente de Voto*, *El Desplazamiento de la Moneda* and *Numax-Fagor-Plus*.

In Bernat’s artistic creations, audience participation is proving to be pivotal, transforming the everyday user of the spectacle into one of its protagonists, ushering, as it were, the way for the eventual disappearance of professional stage actors. In other terms, the participant becomes a *spect-actor*, the sole genuine artifice in the proceedings. The use of technological devices, such as headphones or a remote control, turn into an indispensable instrument in the participants’ action, moreover determining the spectacles basic structure and outline by choosing its dramatic framework.

Outdoor squares and public places are becoming
innovative theatrical venues in which Bernat creates
a *collective effervescence*.

With neither actors nor scenography, there is no clear separation between the stage and the proscenium. Neither is there a particular spot which one could perforce refer to as a theatrical space in the conventional sense of the term: stage and auditorium transform into a spatial *unicum*. Outdoor squares and public places are becoming innovative theatrical venues in which Bernat creates what he likes to define as a *collective effervescence*, seeking in that collective moment the agitating energy to disrupt conventional stage dynamics. Hence public performances become an occasion to experience participatory situations, often replete with social and political undertones. Are public spaces turning into theatres, or, rather are theatres becoming the new venues in which the habitual condition of the individual is transformed into that of an onstage protagonist?

As hinted by its title, *Domini Públic* takes place in a public space, usually outdoors in a square or piazza of some sort. The spectators receive headphones which, once turned on, serve as guides for the performance. The sole referents to the stage are two panels independently indicating “left” and “right”, positioned on both sides of the square. The performance consists of three distinct parts: the first, in which the public are posed really basic questions which are meant to split the audience up into mini-social groups. A second part deals with a war declared between the police and the inmates with the intervention of the Red Cross. In the final section, more intimate questions concerning the emotional sphere of the individual are asked. At this juncture and to close the show, participants are invited to assemble in a closed-off room adjacent to the square, in which they observe the proceedings from outside, embodied by a few small pawns placed in a transparent glass case.

Domini Públic is predominantly characterized by its playful component: as with any game, it solicits participants to follow certain rules of conduct and engagement – such as the performance’s overall design – by means of the headphones, which subject those participating in the game to various questions. Each *spect-actor’s* response is equivalent to a

particular movement in space: participants experience them first-hand while running the gamut of the answers; they take visible shape through the participants' movements. A physical movement which, in certain respects, seems disjointed, particularly given the rather diverse nature of the questions posed. In reality, however, behind a seemingly private framework lacking clear direction, a project with a specific goal is concealed: to create a game around identity, in which the *spect-actors* simulate their very own identities – real, fictional or sought-after. This is, effectively, the result of a series of consecutive actions that not only refer to the overlap between a playful and theatrical dimension, but also and specifically, divide and identify participants, by progressively incorporating them into true-to-life mini-social groups.

Participants all at once find themselves reflecting as though life was ultimately dominated and governed by pre-set and innate rules.

Domini Pública's stage rationale of “question-answer-movement” doesn't differ greatly from the process “question-answer-integration” honed by the individual over the course of a lifetime so as to identify themselves in social terms: firstly, within the family group, then on a scholastic level and finally in the social domain. In addition to being a game *with identity*, it thus embodies a game *with life itself*: participants all at once find themselves reflecting as though life was ultimately dominated and governed by pre-set and innate rules, just as happens with pawns on a board game.

The Catalan director exposes another social chain of events: the *spect-actor* can answer the various questions by putting on countless masks. He or she thus accepts becoming a prisoner, a police officer or a volunteer in the Red Cross. They experience the possibility of being the other without detaching themselves from a game which, albeit make-believe, appears to be attuned with something natural and more lifelike

than nature itself, each time positioning the individual between the *to be* and *appearing to be*. The *spect-actors*, in fact, completely disengage from all theatrical contrivance and view themselves in those around them, by transforming the eye of the beholder into the privileged agent of his own self-representation.

Public space as designed by the Catalan company thus manifests itself—in lieu of the social non-affiliation before being theatrical.

Inserting the individual into an almost automated context, as it appears in *Domini Públic's* stage process, entails wanting to make a creature akin to an avatar, by explicitly contrasting him or her with the vacuity of a non-relationship: the participant discovers himself as an insider within the group, while rarely if ever coming into direct contact with one another. Public space as designed by the Catalan company thus manifests itself—in lieu of the social non-affiliation before being theatrical and includes a dose of ironic criticism towards the automation upon which contemporary society feeds itself.

Domini Públic demonstrates how the participatory paradigm as conceived by Bernat confronts the individual with doubts and questions that lead him or her to reconsider their role in time and in space. We could therefore understand participating in a Bernat performance as an immersion that does not stop merely at a general level (and which could be attributed to the festive or communitarian rationales). He goes further: the spect-actor requires critical emersion, in contrast to the innately automated situational and social relations, as well as theatrical.

This *game with life* that unfolds in the public square is proving to be the paradigmatic image through which *spect-actors* are summoned during a performance to experience first hand *political perplexity*. Examining their individual role as pawn or

avatar becomes the predominant action to discover new meanings, which are never reductive nor exhaustive, to these inexorable identities revealed by the scenic devices employed in *Domini Públic*. A *game of why* not so unlike the stage we customarily inhabit, often unconsciously, and which knows no real ending. It just affords the opportunity to continue questioning the game's whys and wherefores, alluding to the need to ask questions which will forever be shrouded in doubt.

bit.ly/1SxIL3w

English translation by John Barrett.



Domini Públic
Roger Bernat / The Friendly Face of
Fascism

Brasília, 2014

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Domini Públic
Roger Bernat / The Friendly Face of
Fascism

Brasília, 2014

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Domini Públíc
Roger Bernat / The Friendly Face of
Fascism

Brasília, 2014

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Domini Públíc
Roger Bernat / The Friendly Face of
Fascism

Brasília, 2014

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BIOGRAPHY

Carmen Pedullà



Carmen Pedullà was born in 1987, in a little village in the north of Italy. After she graduated in 2010 in Sciences of Communication at Alma Mater Studiorum University of Bologna, she worked for two Italian newspapers. She then decided to continue her academic career in Theatre Studies. She graduated in 2014 with a Bachelor's degree in Theatre at the Department of Performing Arts at Alma Mater Studiorum University of Bologna, after a research period of six months in the city of Barcelona, for an academic project of Thesis in foreign countries. In Barcelona she learnt about the principal experimental theatre's companies. She decided to dedicate her studies to Catalan participative theatre with an analysis of the activity of the company of Roger Bernat. Currently she continues her work of research and study of different interactive and participative paradigms of contemporary theatre.

Photo : © DR.

STROLL

Mons Street Review
Between Group Portraits and Image Rights
Antonia Taddei - X/tnt

Mons Street Review proposes to revive the notion of the map as an artistic representation of our urban environments. Availing of the immersive technology employed in Google Street View, this project carried out by X/tnt in the context of Mons European Capital of Culture has drawn deeply on citizen participation.

Who are the participants in *Mons Street Review* and what is their status? Who are they in general, and how would you describe them? Extras, actors...?

They are inhabitants of the Mons region in southern Belgium, and for the most part comprise established groups. We have in this way worked in conjunction with “friends of the blind”... or with a group of women rugby players. For us it is important to work with groups or associations, because this also provides visibility for their actions. It’s a case of creating a portrait of the city and its inhabitants, so we’re by no means talking about extras. An extra... by their very nature represents something which he or she is not. For example, we worked with former miners: working with extras would have entailed us asking young people to “re-enact” the past – but here we are dealing with former mineworkers aged over eighty. Given the mines are no longer in operation, we proposed that they extract something other than coal, in this case, feathers.

The participants represent themselves in situations, some of which have been staged, insofar as they want to play along. Anyhow, to return to the “friends of the blind”, we offered to equip their white walking canes with paint brushes so as

to enable them to create street art – in a city that is quite impractical for them, with its cobblestones and hilly streets. And when we look at the works they painted in and on the street, we come to realise, given their construction, what an exceptional sense of space they possess.

Between portrait and self-portrait, who fulfils what? What procedure is involved in the creation?

For the most part we passed through the following steps: First, we met with various groups and exchanged ideas, so as to grasp what was important to them. Following these meetings and exchanges of views, we make an artistic proposal to the group in question. Thus far nobody has turned us down.

To take the example of the miners again, they asked us if there would be a scene involving a gas explosion – hence we devised an explosion scene, featuring a casualty being removed on a stretcher... But since the project involved them in the process of extracting feathers, this explosion produces a cloud of feathers.

Could this be compared to those merchant guilds portraits, or those ship-owners associations, who insisted in being represented as a group, and on occasion with their symbolic attributes, in seventeenth century Dutch portraiture?

This phenomenon is actually comparable, except that the minors are not directly the sponsors... And while we are talking about a public commission, and that public money does belong to us all, they are, indirectly, sponsors... Yet there is all the same a difference. They are also comparable because this work is ultimately closer to painting – even to polyptyches – than to cinema. Whereas a film comprises images unfurling through time, the *Mons Street Review* consists of images that take place in space.

How did you handle legal issues surrounding the use of the images?

We were strict, very strict... possibly even too strict, when all is said and done. By routinely asking all participants to sign documents with which they forsook their rights, we were actually being overly finicky. Once one is in the public space, and where someone is not at the centre of the image, there is no need to request authorisation. But since we genuinely wanted to play with the idea of re-appropriation of that public space encapsulated in the Street Review, we still did so—even though we were legally permitted to “steal” the image of those who happened to be passing by.

This project is preoccupied by the question of the law, as is the “code de la déconduite” [code of misconduct] upon which you’re now working...

Definitely. We must reclaim the whole question of law. Most of the time we experience it in its repressive mode, but there is much to be gained by considering the law as an integral element of our social relations, and therefore as something that we can change whenever it is perverted... for it should by right be lawful!

bit.ly/1S9iuYA

bit.ly/1MicojA

Interview by Antoine Pickels.



L. Nobileau, friend of the blind. Participants' parade at the Carré in Mons, 15th of March 2015.

Mons Street Review
X/tnt

Mons, 2014-2015

© Alessia Montu



Friends of the blinds. Image of the filming.

Mons Street Review
X/tnt

Mons, 2014-2015

© Bram Goots



Distribution of the last props. Participants' parade at the Carré in Mons, 15th of March 2015.

Mons Street Review
X/tnt

Mons, 2014-2015

© Alessia Montu



Participants from Adeps (Administration of Physical Education and Sports).
Image of the filming.

Mons Street Review
X/tnt

Mons, 2014-2015

© Bram Goots



The Miners Association. Image of the filming.

Mons Street Review
X/tnt

Mons, 2014-2015

© Nathalie Maury



The Miners Association at the participants' parade at the Carré in Mons,
15th March 2015.

Mons Street Review
X/tnt

Mons, 2014-2015

© Alessia Montu



The BAM (Mons Fine Arts). Image of the filming.

Mons Street Review
X/tnt

Mons, 2014-2015

© Bram Goots



BAM at the participants' parade at the Carré in Mons, 15th March 2015.

Mons Street Review
X/tnt

Mons, 2014-2015

© Alessia Montu



Pascal Forlet, member of the Mons 2015 crew.

Mons Street Review
X/tnt

Mons, 2014-2015

© Nathalie Maury



Pascal Forlet, participant.

Mons Street Review
X/tnt

Mons, 2014-2015

© Nathalie Maury



Urban surfers. Image of the filming.

Mons Street Review
X/tnt

Mons, 2014-2015

© Nathalie Maury



Wendy and the halberdiers. Image of the filming.

Mons Street Review
X/tnt

Mons, 2014-2015

© X/tnt

BIOGRAPHY
X/tnt

The theatre company X/tnt, led by Antonia Taddei and Ludovic Nobileau, is a specialist of direct and ephemeral street actions, blitz intervention in public space and research of new formats for theatrical experimentations. For example, its “stress-free” operations aimed at eradicate stress in the city as an essential ecological necessity, setting up ephemeral artistic interventions close to flash mobs. Thus, X/tnt rolled out a mobile human crosswalk on Place de l’Étoile in Paris so pedestrians could cross the square without using the underground walkway. Through their participative and maverick actions in urban fields, X/tnt reclaims the use of public space and want to reinvent the city. In 2014-2015, X/tnt was on a residency in Mons to create *Mons Street Review*, 10 km of streets, specially staged with local residents... and filmed by a 260 degrees camera.

bit.ly/1ReBF2k

Photo : © Ludovic Alessi for X/tnt.

ITINERARY

What can I do for you?
Anne-Cécile Vandalem is taking orders
Nestor Baillard

In tribute to Françoise G.

“What can I do for you?” bit.ly/1l9Rqh7 is an action-project cum artistic experiments that has been conducted by Anne-Cécile Vandalem since May 2014.⁰¹ The project’s scope expanded considerably with the programme of public events on offer during Mons 2015, European Capital of Culture with *La ville en jeu(x)* bit.ly/1E51R6O [“The city at play/at stake”].

01. Part 1: Shopshop, Brussels from 19th of May until 21st of September 2014. Part 2: Liège-Guillemins Station from 11th of October until 12th of November 2014. Part 3: Mons, Café Europa from 27th of April to 23rd of May 2015, in the context of *la ville en jeu(x)*—Mons 2015.

Beginning with the performative question “What can I do for you?”, this project proposes to individual citizens to commission a living work of art, which Anne-Cécile Vandalem will subsequently implement in collaboration with them.

This at once naive and awkward question *What can I do for you?* examines – by putting to the test the act of creating something together—the tacit contract binding the artist and his/her commissioner so as to transform it into a poetic moment. Anne-Cécile Vandalem thus describes her initial idea:

“This outreach strategy aims to enable everyone to become a fully-fledged actor and not a passive witness of a practice that exceeds or excludes them. Without claiming that art should be reduced to satisfy everyone’s desires, this project aims to launch a democratic dialogue in which citizens and artists collaborate freely and responsibly in the development of a shared endeavour.”

We should not be distracted by the apparent candour (or cunning?) of this idea of direct participation in the development of a shared endeavour. Indeed, Vandalem and her team are acutely aware that behind every word, every step in the process – from its initial announcement to its completion – the terrain is laden with good (and less good!) intentions. Hence the process is built with patience and accuracy – two essential terms for an overall understanding of Vandalem’s work.

The cogency of this strategy is founded upon the fact that the procedure is dismantled, clarified, questioned and forced into its last dialectical entrenchments at each stage of its development. Actually, this might entail inventing a (democratic?) board game, whose objective and rules would precisely be the establishment of the objective and rules of the game, a game of mutual discovery which aims to discover life in a simultaneity to which art enables access, and the path which leads to it, since one (life) and the other (the path) are unknown and unpredictable when being created. This process’s indecision confronts the game’s protagonists in the throes of defining themselves – commissioners and artists alike – with the more or less formal obligation of assuming a stance concerning their own relationship to artistic creation and its tacit preconceptions.

Let us take the example of the definition that Vandalem and her team propose for the “commission”:

“We will call COMMISSION the verbal operation (indeed, normally, the dialogue) by which a paying subject, be it an individual or public (hereinafter referred to as the COMMISSIONER) engages an artist (or his/her team) for an artistic performance corresponding to the specific skills that the artist professes to possess, or which the commissioner ascribes to the artist out of familiarity or ignorance.

Historically, the commissioner is the figure who provides the economic wherewithal to produce the work and who remains the owner (although he/she might elect not to be the sole user). Hence, we consider that in a democracy

the citizen taxpayer constitutes the public commissioner. In this case, he/she may choose to exercise his/her power over the commission as an individual commissioner, or on behalf of the community to which he/she belongs.”

Do we act in public space as individuals, or as social animals?

Behind this practical definition, through which the dialogue got underway, a whole series of questions arise: Does an artist possess a specific skill, or claim to do so? Do we act in public space as individuals, or as social animals? In paying our taxes, do we remain the owners of the means that we delegate to the public authorities, notably to subsidize culture? Does the average contribution of 6,27€ by every Belgian citizen (Belgium: 11,239,755 inhabitants on 1 January 2015) to create the overall budget for Mons 2015 (70,486,744€) correspond to the individual price of each commission?⁰²

02. This calculation is based upon the fact that the European Union originally designated Belgium as a nation which could host a European Capital of Culture in 2015.

And more generally, if I agree to play a game for which I yet don't know the rules, is there a context that demarcates my freedom by the fact that the game takes place in an artistic environment? As a sensitive and individual expression of the artist, is art adversely affected by this productive hijacking? Or, on the contrary, doesn't it appear even more entrenched than the singularity of the artist confronted with the commission's "crash-test"?

Indeed, starting from the wish expressed by citizens and discussed during a conversation arbitrarily set at half-an-hour, Vandalem and her team offer an artistic response in the form of an artistic creation, be it individual or collective, secret or public, performative or plastic, which must reflect the will of the commissioner in terms of content, and the power to retain his/her poetic right in the formulation of the artistic response. In response to this power, the commissioner has

the right to remain anonymous (this option will never be used in the proposed project).

What can I do for you? is primarily an exercise in democracy seen not as a state or as a condition, but rather as a participatory process, with its procedures for organising powers, its negotiated formalities, its cooperative or representative forms. Two commissions and their implementation are here briefly presented as examples:

One of twenty commissions implemented originated from Julien, a student of political science:

- Hello.
- Hello.
- Nice to meet you.
- Nice to meet you. Julien, might I ask you the first question? What can I do for you?
- Well, how about bringing down the Belgian government.
- Bring down the Belgian government.
- Yes, the current Michel government.⁰³
- (She writes) Bring – down – the – government –
- Michel...
- Might I ask you what impels you to give this commission?
- What impels me is that just about everywhere in Europe and also here in Belgium, there is a growling social protest amongst traditional labour movements, but also amongst those groups against the austerity policies that have been implemented. And so I would find it interesting that there might also be an artistic network, that artists could embody this drive to bring down the government. I found it interesting to give a commission to an artist in order that this protest, this social anger might also be taken over by artists.
- OK. Might I ask you, what is an artist for you?
- ...⁰⁴

03. Surname of the current Belgian Prime Minister, Charles Michel.

04. Partial transcription of a recording of Julien in conversation with Julia.

Following the prescribed rules the conversation continued for half an hour, and, at the close of the dialogue, the commission was finally thus formulated: to ask the citizenry how to bring down a government.

The ensuing artistic proposal was the following: for two days Vandalem's team walked the city streets asking those they came across to propose a method, legal or otherwise, to bring down a government. The written proposals – on blue paper for democratic methods, on orange paper for other means – were crumpled up in the form of paper pellets and mixed with others in a trolley that had been transformed into a fairground cart or ballot-box. On Sunday, the day on which crowds gather on Mons' Grand Place, the proposals were read aloud in public by actors from Vandalem's team, hanging on to a metal structure under smoky multi-coloured Bengal lights.

Another commission came from Françoise G., a personality in Mons' cultural milieu known for her dynamism and *joie de vivre*. She never misses out on a show or an exhibition. She wishes to participate in a performance on beauty. The Vandalem team asked her to bring along ten items from her home. Five conversation tables were installed in various emblematic sites throughout the city; passers-by were then invited to discuss with Françoise their aesthetic perceptions concerning the objects she brought along – a polished stone, a plastic garden gnome, a drawing of her grand-son Merlin, a painting bought at a flea market, an African amulet... The conversations, which were limited to an hour in duration, were not meant to function as a means to map out beauty, but more simply to put words to a commonly shared sentiment, but often inexpressible within the conversation's limited words.

An urgent call for a re-appropriation of the sensible world as a poetic space, for a form of living together that would take the time and forms to appreciate the other.

Few commissions will be overtly political; from the outset they are mostly concerned with the embellishment of day-to-day lives and human relationships.⁰⁵ Undoubtedly, the artistic context of the production and the fact that it happens in Mons during the period the city was chosen as a European Capital of Culture influenced those who gave the commissions. On a deeper level, we could see in their responses an urgent call for a re-appropriation of the sensible world as a poetic space, for a form of living together that would take the time and forms to appreciate the other as an entirely separate subject, despite or even because of the asymmetrical nature of the relationship. So that the game of playing together does not turn into a zero-sum game.

05. Implemented commissions: 1, Françoise V: *To have five persons listen (a little) to the problems arising from the mistreatment of children.* 2, Carine M: *To venture a hypothesis on changing the tradition of cuddly-toys.* 3, Françoise M: *Being an actress in a performance about beauty.* 4, Pascal D: *Ways to suggest love in the Jardin du Beffroi.* 5, Séréna P: *Ways to make me sing in public.* 6, Marie-Ange: *To create an impact in the rue des Capucins or more specifically in my business premises.* 7, Lisbeth V. and Alexa G: *Untitled.* 8, Sarah B: *To offer something unusual to my cousin for her wedding.* 9, Martine R: *To create an object which will procure hope.* 10, Mathias B: *To stage produce the opening scene of a piece I've written.* 11, Julien N: *How to bring down the current Michel government.* 12, Barbara M: *To revamp my balcony.* 13, Laurent B: *To make me smile again.*

English translation by John Barrett.



Commission *Being an actress in a performance about beauty* (Françoise G.).

Que puis-je faire pour vous? (What can I do for You?)

Anne-Cécile Vandalem

Mons, April-May 2015

© DR



Commission *Being an actress in a performance about beauty* (Françoise G.).

Que puis-je faire pour vous? (What can I do for You?)

Anne-Cécile Vandalem

Mons, April-May 2015

© DR



Commission *Being an actress in a performance about beauty* (Françoise G.).

Que puis-je faire pour vous? (What can I do for You?)

Anne-Cécile Vandalem

Mons, April-May 2015

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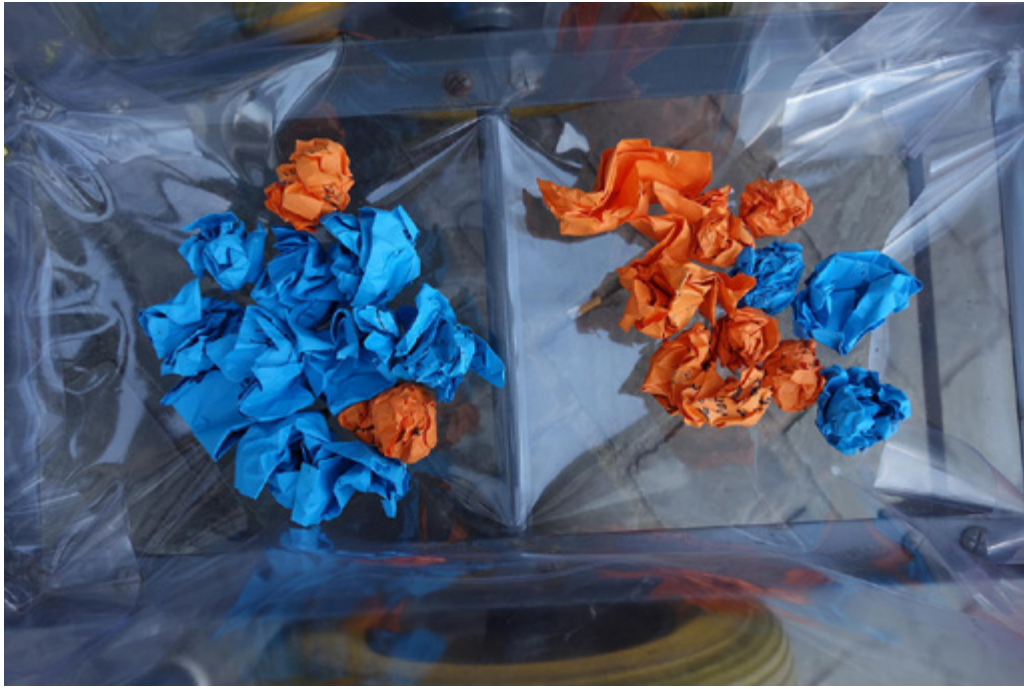
Commission *How to bring down the current Michel government* (Julien N).

Que puis-je faire pour vous? (What can I do for You?)

Anne-Cécile Vandalem

Mons, April-May 2015

© DR



Commission *How to bring down the current Michel government* (Julien N).

Que puis-je faire pour vous? (What can I do for You?)

Anne-Cécile Vandalem

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© DR



Commission *How to bring down the current Michel government* (Julien N).

Que puis-je faire pour vous? (What can I do for You?)

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Commission *How to bring down the current Michel government* (Julien N).

Que puis-je faire pour vous? (What can I do for You?)

Anne-Cécile Vandalem

Mons, April-May 2015

© DR



Commission *How to bring down the current Michel government* (Julien N).

Que puis-je faire pour vous? (What can I do for You?)

Anne-Cécile Vandalem

Mons, April-May 2015

© DR



Commission *Ways to suggest love in the Jardin du Beffroi* (Pascal D.).
with Émilie Flamant

Que puis-je faire pour vous? (What can I do for You?)
Anne-Cécile Vandalem

Mons, April-May 2015

© DR



Commission To offer something unusual to my cousin for her wedding (Sarah B.).

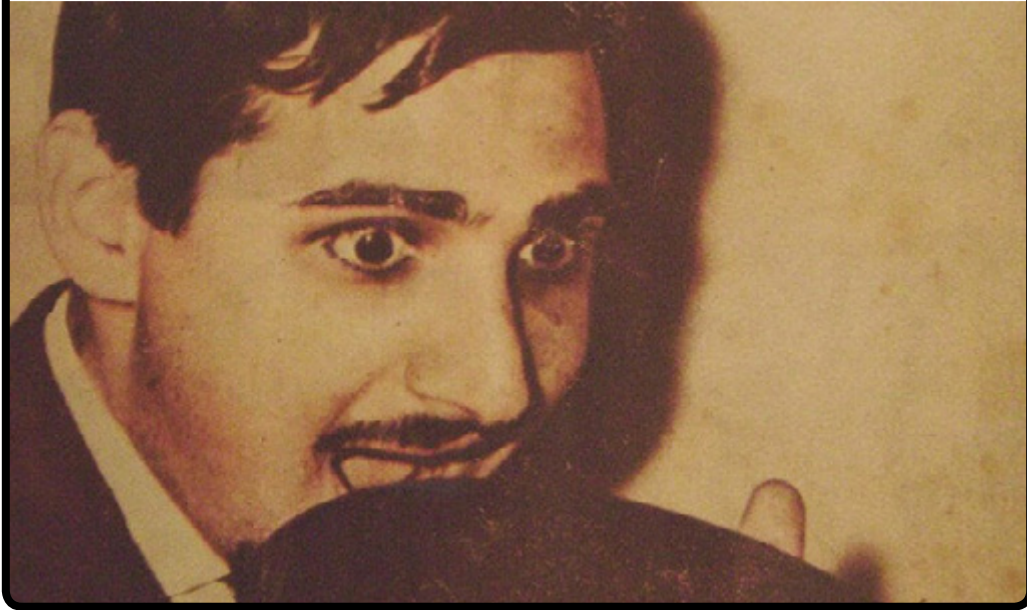
Que puis-je faire pour vous? (What can I do for You?)

Anne-Cécile Vandalem

Mons, April-May 2015

© DR

BIOGRAPHY
Nestor Baillard



Nestor Baillard studied History of Art and Anthropology at the University of Kobenhavn (Denmark). Specialist of Nordic mythologies, he currently teaches comparative literature at U-Mons—Belgium. His Phd (*Doudou, my beautiful Doudou, PUM*, 1998) was an in-depth analysis about the origins of the Lumeçon's ritual battle, and more generally on the place of the dragon in the Walloon imagination. Fascinated by popular culture and carnivals, he travels European cities to demonstrate the importance and vitality of pagan festivities. As part of Mons 2015, European Capital of Culture, he was invited to speak at various round tables. His next essay, *Can Culture Dissolve into Ecology?*, to be published by Éditions de la Liberté, will focus on Art management and notions of excellence, singularity and expenses at a time when climate and environmental issues are at stake.

Photo : © DR.

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

The Brussels Central Station Time Laboratory

Can a Train Station Function like the Internet?

Ljud

Over recent years the Ljud group has been focusing on exploring the potential for interactive artistic events in public space. Our participation in the Cifas “Signal” event in Brussels afforded us an opportunity to further explore the role of artists as catalysts for creative expression among the general public.

Upon arrival at Brussels Central train station it quickly became clear that time flows differently there. For some it flies; they have to keep running just trying to keep up; for others it seems to crawl along with the waiting minutes dragging like hours. And then there are those who find themselves caught in the loop, repeating endless variations of identical routines over and over in one single day. Time and our relationship to it were to become the unifying theme for the project. But how does one best approach such a topic?

One might well argue that audience participation constitutes an essential part of any performing art that has played a vital role in society.

From our perspective, “participatory art” is not particularly new. One might well argue that audience participation constitutes an essential part of any performing art that has played a vital role in society. The festivals of Dionysus, Balinese theatre and Shakespeare’s Globe Theatre all incorporate

active audiences, at once deeply involved in the creative process itself and its over-riding concerns.

Since the days of Artaud a suspicion prevails that contemporary society lacks certain kinds of vital rituals, that classical performing arts have lost the ability to furnish them. It is now our mission to strive to rediscover these lost and bygone rituals and a participative basis for theatre. Visions of people dancing in circles, altered mental states and shared communal experiences present themselves readily as possible contributions.

A participative process of artistic creation can address millions living in a heterogeneous urban metropolis.

Yet working on the *Temporary Time Laboratory* project ushered us in a fresh direction. It entailed us taking into consideration not merely what modern life has taken away but also what it offers. Nowadays the participative ritual need not be based on the scale of approximately two hundred and fifty inhabitants of a small village who know each other, live in the same vicinity and share similar views and concerns. Instead a participative process of artistic creation can address millions living in a heterogeneous urban metropolis. Of course, not all of them will – or want to – actively participate in it. Though a mere two hundred and fifty people might participate, the crucial difference is they do not share similar postal-codes, outlooks, social backgrounds, or know anything about each other. What brings them together is a common interest, a creative impulse. Together, they can potentially create a pluralistic collaborative work, expressing the diversity of today's multicultural society. Sounds somewhat familiar? It should. It is the basic principle of online collaboration. Midway through our stay in Brussels we came to realise that we were spontaneously recreating elements of Internet social networks in real life.

We constructed a “wall” where people could write/post about who/what they were waiting for. There were places where photographic works on a similar theme accumulated in an almost identical way to the gallery of photos which can be viewed via the use of hash tags (#) on Instagram. Gradually, we started to see the Central Train Station itself as analogous to the Internet – a hub of connections where residents from various areas in and around Brussels can easily cross paths, meet and work together.

So, is it really useful to think about a participative artistic project in public space through the perspective of the Internet age? Shouldn’t “live” performing art offer an alternative to virtual presence, instant gratification and superficial “likeability” often associated with Internet use? Indeed it does, but this doesn’t entail that we should not avail of all disposable tools in creating this alternative.

Was it great art? Not really. But, it definitely was “living art”.

A few examples: we availed of the process of taking photos with a mobile phone – an action usually associated with not being fully present in the moment—as the starting point for an on-going exploration in which participants observed the passing of time at the station. The “selfie”, which is commonly associated with superficial narcissism, was readapted for introspection and reflection by having participants initially take a photo of themselves, then spending a few minutes thinking about an intimate topic and afterwards taking another photo. On our “waiting wall” anonymous expressions of longing were mixed with spontaneous jokes; children’s drawings were juxtaposed with anti-capitalist slogans; a group of young skaters found a way to “hack” and mutate the wall into a 3D visual installation and also drew a funny penis with legs. Was it great art? Not really. But, it definitely was “living art”. By the end of our stay in Brussels, we felt as though we had barely

dipped our toes in the water and there remains an ocean of possibilities waiting to be explored. So why not dive in? The water is fine.

bit.ly/1P5xdUw

The Temporary Time Laboratory
Ljud

Signal, Central Station, Brussels
Belgium, 2014

© Cifas



Watch the video on: bit.ly/1P5xdUw



A user of the station stopping time.

The Temporary Time Laboratory
Ljud

Signal, Central Station, Brussels
Belgium, 2014

© Katarina Zalar



A member of Ljud stopping time.

The Temporary Time Laboratory
Ljud

Signal, Central Station, Brussels
Belgium, 2014

© Katarina Zalar



The Waiting Wall.

The Temporary Time Laboratory
Ljud

Signal, Central Station, Brussels
Belgium, 2014

© Katarina Zalar

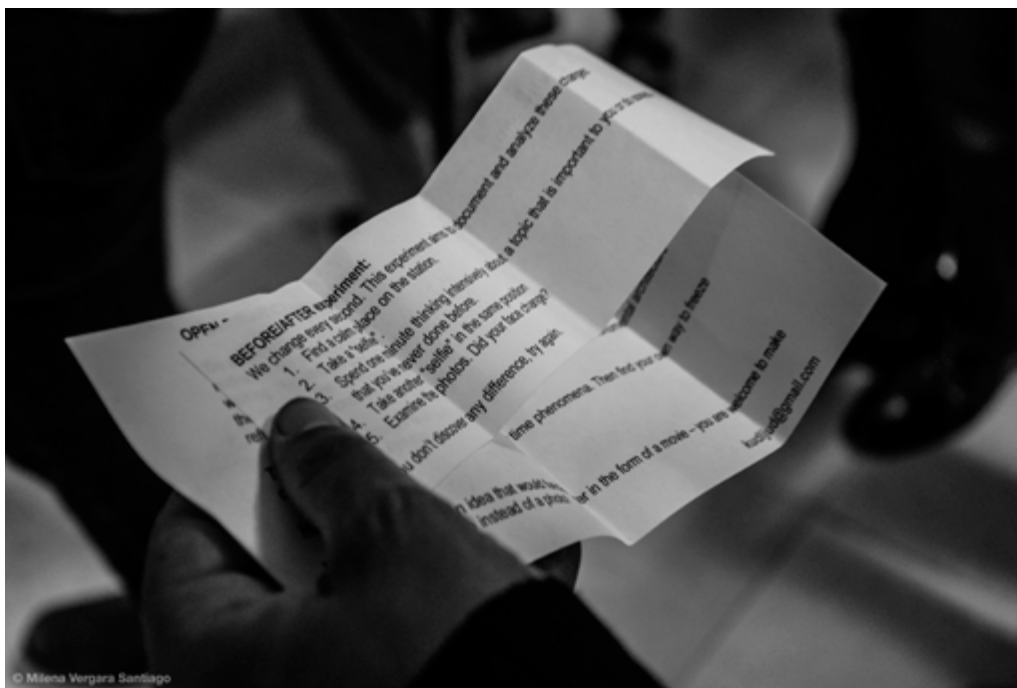


Skaters hacking the Waiting Wall.

The Temporary Time Laboratory
Ljud

Signal, Central Station, Brussels
Belgium, 2014

© Ljud



Double "Selfie" protocol.

The Temporary Time Laboratory
Ljud

Signal, Central Station, Brussels
Belgium, 2014

© Milena Vergara Santiago



Entrance towards the "Time Machine".

The Temporary Time Laboratory
Ljud

Signal, Central Station, Brussels
Belgium, 2014

© Milena Vergara Santiago



Spectators during a showing of "Cinema of Reality".

The Temporary Time Laboratory
Ljud

Signal, Central Station, Brussels
Belgium, 2014

© Milena Vergara Santiago



During an action to slow down time.

The Temporary Time Laboratory
Ljud

Signal, Central Station, Brussels
Belgium, 2014

© Kristien Haegdorens

BIOGRAPHY

Ljud



Ljud is a collective of idealists from very different backgrounds who have gathered to change the world through the medium of art. They believe in theatre as a “living” phenomenon that must be in direct contact with the present times. Playing with the “fourth wall” between the actor and the audience is vital for the group in order to establish theatre performance as a game, a ritual and a social event. They are currently focused on performing in public spaces, combining different media, genres and techniques, but you can also find them making music, films, writing, DJ-ing, gardening, playing chess and practicing levitation.

bit.ly/1P5xdUw

Photo : © Ljud.

NEIGHBOURHOOD

We are More than the Place Where We Live

FiraTàrrego, a Festival looking for Inclusion

Jordi Duran i Roldós

Access to culture, to culture that is with a capital C, and not just to the simple and perfectly legitimate entertainment, is a rare thing nowadays. This can not be strictly put down alone to the shameful 21% hike in VAT the Spanish state demand from stage productions; it can be understood by examining the complexity of the society of which we are a part.

We, as a society, comprise more than men, more than adult men and woman, more than the elderly, more than mere children. We are more than white people, we are much more than Christians – whether practising or not – or mere heirs to the Christian morality that has dominated the West for the last millennium. We are much more than our physical and moral capacities, much more than the place where we live, than our nation, our culture and our mother tongue. We are much more than our material inheritance, than our education, our sexual orientation, our health and illnesses. We are much more than just a way of understanding the world. We are at once everything and nothing; we are unique, each and every one of us.

Why do we still insist on producing shows written in the West by Westerners?

The cultural activity interlinking us is not inclusive. Our state-run facilities do not sufficiently integrate; they are not

facilitators for the citizenry, nor do they offer a roof for everyone. If we survey the cultural programmes for large public spaces, in particular for performing arts creation and presentation, we can observe that they rarely reflect in any substantial way the social reality of our environment, nor address who we are today, or what is happening to us. If, for example, in Lleida province one in every five persons is a newcomer, why do we still insist on producing shows written in the West by Westerners?

Whereas privately funded theatre is basically aimed at mainstream tastes, public theatre, when not behaving like a private concern, modestly attempts to represent everyone, or, rather to offer everyone a decent opportunity. Yet, the omnipresence of elderly white men stultifies, and that is both in front of and behind the stage and/or institutions. I would like to see more shows written by and featuring women, by people under thirty, by Protestants, Arabs and Jews, by those with other capabilities. Furthermore, I want to see ambitious productions which would incorporate collectives and groups at risk of social exclusion in the creative process, so they can be recognised as a genuine artistic asset.

I don't think that public or private cultural events – even though the purely private ones are well able to do as they please – should have to incorporate special segments dedicated to diversity into their programming from a conventional marketing point of view. They should not present any exceptions, nor open as many windows as collectives could think of. They need panoramic vistas. We can't erect barriers between ourselves and others so as to struggle to seat everyone in the stalls. For this very reason I don't believe in the need for those segments for "queers", for "kids", or cycles dedicated to woman, to immigrants or community practices as a punctual or fashionable feat. Programming should transcend conventional labelling, or at least aspire to staging the kaleidoscopic reality we live in, impossible as that may seem, even if much more productive in terms of form and content than we are accustomed to.

We can't erect barriers between ourselves and others so as to struggle to seat everyone in the stalls.

FiraTàrrega is a complex project with varied objectives. We monitor research, stimulus and the promotion of street arts. We are a market for theatre, a festival and a popular celebration. This was until recently a project that lived away from its home city, turned its back on those citizens who ultimately gave it legitimacy and watched how this festival materialised mushroom-like in their native city in the second week of September. A festival organised by a well-informed few for the most part from outside Tàrrega. Cutbacks aside, I firmly believe festivals subside because nobody champions them. If they do not belong to the people, what significance do they have?

For this reason, since 2011 we have launched a process that seeks to work closer with our neighbours, a gradual toppling of the ivory tower in which we've sheltered throughout the year, isolated, when our activities were less visible and participatory in nature.

Nowadays Tàrrega is home to a course of Masters in Street Art Creation, a pioneering international study that is a collaborative venture between FiraTàrrega and Lleida University that transforms a city of almost 17 000 inhabitants into a university campus every two years. On a daily basis we can observe open-air rehearsals, the coming and going of teachers, the students' energy that impels them to suggest street activities and share them with their fellow citizens. Without spelling it out too explicitly, those students participating in 2015 have just launched *Brew Fest*, a festival committed to the artistic creation of venues serving food and drink – quite a local success – transforming the city into a culinary hotbed, combining our task and the locals' general notion of culture.

Artists are not Martians; art is useful and necessary.

Moreover, we can also boast that the city has a new programme of cultural activities involving FiraTàrrega spanning from March to September. This cultural provision linked to the city's own routine activities aims at expanding the creative processes which we organised for the city's residents. The slogan leaves no doubts: artists are not Martians; art is useful and necessary.

Tàrrega audiences not only have the chance to participate in open rehearsals and follow a performance that will be premièred at FiraTàrrega, they also can enjoy a space where they can closely follow the creator's discourse, and make it their own; getting to know it and connect with it at a proximity which neither party is used to. Team members recall with deep affection the first Creation Support Programme at FiraTàrrega in 2011, and delighted in the fact that the first runs by the participating companies included many local enthusiasts. Spectators, spurred on by their friends, would eagerly arrive at some première or other, such as La Veronal and their unforgettable *Pájaros muertos* [Dead Birds]. Over time, this has gradually become part of the project's normal process.

Yet, much of the material we use is addressed to local residents as an artistic asset in itself. We try to create bridges of dialogue with our neighbours that go beyond just featuring them as extras or volunteers. Closely related to street arts – similar to that FiraTàrrega is built upon – this practice centres around two essential tenets: the exhibition space and the audience itself, who are a completely active element of the show.

Initially, we were conscious of the development of the project for citizens via collaborative experiences with schools, local associations and amateur theatre groups. However, there is

a group of less-visible citizens and one which we all-to-often ignore, those with no connections or networks, with limited resources or of an age where contact with others is complicated. Working with these groups is more difficult: they are a non-collective collective, with no representative chosen by a committee to speak on their behalf.

We have also worked with those at risk of social exclusion and with those municipal bodies in charge of looking after them, such as the Associació Alba or the Cultural Initiative Support Office. *Som*, by the Amantis collective, bit.ly/1YdCyfZ or *Close Encounters of the Different Kind*, bit.ly/1N7fw8E by the Hungarian Martin Boross are but two examples of such non-instrumentalised stage experiences that go beyond a merely therapeutic or integrative function.

Another focus has been those people or collectives closely linked to a noteworthy venue or space, such as the project we did in 2012 at the former Cal Trapat farm machinery factory in conjunction with the Amebeu Teatre theatre company. Those who live or work in Tàrrega share this space as a testimony of what we once were, and therefore are; it has been one of the main abiding passions of this current project. We want to interpret the vestiges of the urban and rural landscape in the Urgell County through the stories put forward by creators from all over, and show a different Tàrrega at every festival, for locals and visitors alike.

We are striving to be able to offer experiences that invigorate our spectators-cum-actors, and that will improve us all, collectively.

Nowadays we are working so as to take everything into account, seeking a balance between themes and forms, art and entertainment, degree of risk and commitment or participation. We are striving to be able to offer experiences that invigorate our spectators-cum-actors, and that will improve

us all, collectively. We don't deny that we all make mistakes: we start again and move on. Nothing is for certain or lasts forever. We will work until such time as we are allowed, or insofar as we are able to continue with the energy and drive that the city, sector and institution deserve.

Our aim is to contribute to the creation of a more inclusive project, one that reflects the commitment to our work, a commitment matched by many of the street acts we have programmed. Street arts are not only synonymous with celebration and festivals, but also with a meeting of citizens who discuss a series of concerns that grow out of a specific artistic theme. We understand art as a motor for change, as a space for social improvement; and the culture industry as an arena for activities capable of creating audiences through the use of more inclusive practices.

bit.ly/1riaVFH



Los Pájaros Muertos
La Veronal

Tàrrega, 2011

© Jesús Vilamajó (archives FiraTàrrega)



Ferro Colat
Amebeu Teatre

Tàrrrega, 2012

© Francesc Rosell (archives FiraTàrrrega)



El Rei Gaspar
Foradelugar

Tàrrrega, 2014

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Som
Amantis

Tàrrega, 2014

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Close encounters of a different kind
Martin Boross

Tàrrrega, 2014

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Chicken Legz
Animal Religion

Tàrrrega, 2014

© Martí E. Berenguer (archives FiraTàrrrega)

BIOGRAPHY

Jordi Duran i Roldós



Jordi Duran i Roldós (Sant Antoni de Vilamajor, 1974) graduated from the University of Girona with a degree in Spanish and a degree in Catalan. He also studied stage direction and dramaturgy at the Institut del Teatre (School of Drama of Barcelona). He was an assistant to the director Xavier Alberti and has been part of the production team of the Teatre Lliure (Barcelona) under the direction of Josep Montanyès. He has also been Director of the Theatre Company of the University of Girona (Aula de Teatre de la UdG) for six years (2003-2008). Currently he is the artistic Director of FiraTàrrrega Festival, co-directs FiraTàrrrega Master's Degree in Street Arts Creation (University of Lleida), and is professor of the Master's Degree in Cultural Management organized by the International University of Catalonia.

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Klaxon
(when art lives in town)

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